

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1, 4, 9-11, 18-20 and 34 have been amended. New claims 40-60 have been added. Claims 1 and 34 have been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 8. New claims 40-55 include the allowable subject matter of claim 18 rewritten in independent form. New claims 56-60 include the allowable limitations of claim 18 combined with method claim 34. Claims 4, 9-11 and 18-20 have been amended to address formality issues only. No new matter has been added.

Election/Restriction

Claims 34-39 were originally withdrawn as being directed to a non-elected method. At the time Applicants elected the apparatus of claims 1-33, the Examiner agreed to rejoin the method claims 34-39 later in prosecution if amended to track the limitations of any future allowable apparatus claim. At this time, Applicants request rejoinder of method claims 34 and 36-39 as amended with the pending apparatus claims. Applicants further request joining new method claims 56-60 with the pending apparatus claims. New claims 56-60 include the allowable limitations of claim 18.

§103 Rejections

Claims 1, 3-6 and 12-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Miller (US 6,155,699) in view of Benson (US 5,831,375). Claims 1, 3-7 and 12-17 were further rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over McNulty (US 6,686,676) in view of Benson. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. However, in an effort to expedite allowance of the present case, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the allowable limitations of claim 8, thus rendering this rejection moot.

New Claims

New claim 40 includes the allowable limitations of claim 18 rewritten in independent form. Claims 41-55 track the limitations of original claims 19-33. New claim 56 includes the allowable limitations of claim 18 rewritten as a method step in combination with claim 34.

Claims 57-60 track the limitations of original method claims 36-39. Consideration and allowance of new claims 40-60 is respectfully requested.

In view of the above, Applicants request reconsideration of the application in the form of a Notice of Allowance. If a phone conference would be helpful in resolving any further issues related to this matter, please contact Applicants' attorney listed below at 612-371-5387. Please continue to direct all future written correspondence to 3M Innovative Properties Company, P.O. Box 33427, St. Paul, Minnesota 55133-3427.

Respectfully submitted,

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